

## IN MEMORIAM

## A Tribute to ISPOR Founding Executive Director Marilyn Dix Smith, RPh, PhD



We learned with great sadness, that Marilyn Dix Smith, who guided and shaped ISPOR for nearly 20 years as its Founding Executive Director, recently passed away. Her unexpected death is a loss for the health economics and outcomes research (HEOR) community and for her family, many friends, and colleagues.

ISPOR extends its deepest condolences to Marilyn's beloved husband Dr William F. McGhan. Bill was ISPOR's first president and, as you might expect, someone who Marilyn shared many of the same interests, including gardening and operating a vineyard in her native Ohio. Our sympathies extend to her

children, Brent Smith, Brian Smith, Matthew McGhan, and Monica Vandenberg; 8 grandchildren; and 2 sisters, Roberta Sullivan and Patricia Casillas.

Her career included serving in several executive roles at Lederle Laboratories, including director, managed care pharmacy, and director of quality control. Marilyn received her BS in pharmacy and PhD in pharmaceutical science from Ohio State University. She published many scientific articles and delivered many presentations over the years on HEOR-related topics. She was also a cofounder of the American Association for Pharmaceutical Scientists, a member of the American Society of Association Executives, and involved in many other pharmacy and healthcare professional organizations.

At ISPOR, Dr Smith's vision shaped our society into the leading global organization for HEOR. She led the Society through many milestones, including its first scientific conference on HEOR in 1996, the establishment our regional chapters, the launch of our flagship publication *Value in Health*, the creation of the Society's short course program, the founding of our student network, the organization of the global consortia and networks, and the development of books and many online HEOR resources.

For nearly 20 years Marilyn Dix Smith was the guiding force behind ISPOR's foundation, growth, and direction. She also recognized and greatly valued the contributions of its members and leaders. Upon her retirement in 2014, Marilyn requested that the Society establish an award to recognize outstanding volunteer leaders for their consistent, broad, and meaningful direction to ISPOR. The Marilyn Dix Smith Leadership Award was established that year in her honor.

With her vigor and passion, Marilyn inspired all who met her. She will be dearly missed and fondly remembered. While we grieve our loss, we are thankful for having our lives enriched by Marilyn's essence, kindness, ideals, and personal and professional contributions.

For those who would like to pay tribute or tell a story about Marilyn as the inspiring friend, colleague, and leader that she was, please go to [www.ispor.org](http://www.ispor.org) and post a comment on her remembrance page. ●

"Marilyn was a visionary, and took the organization from nothing to a huge multi national group. She had a vision as a leader, but most of all she was a dear sweet woman and a wonderful friend. I will miss her and I've missed seeing her at recent events, and offer all my best for Bill and her family."

*Lorne Basskin, Friend and Colleague*

"She was immensely helpful and supportive when I became the ISPOR Institutional Chair. Her guidance was much appreciated. RIP, Marilyn, I'm sure you will continue to organize those in the next life!"

*Sissi Pham, ISPOR Institutional Chair*

"It's with much sadness that I learned about Marilyn Dix Smith passing, ISPOR's Founding Executive Director. Marilyn was an inspirational figure when I just started my career and involvement with ISPOR. I will never forget her gentle guidance when we discussed the idea of establishing the ISPOR South Africa Chapter, the first in Africa. Her leadership, passion, and support during the process went way beyond what any Founder and CEO could do given the size and magnitude of ISPOR at the time!"

*Joao Carapinha, Founder ISPOR South Africa Chapter*